



**ABERCARN
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL**



**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR
FOR THE YEAR 1967**

ABERCARN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Councillors:

Chairman	-	-	Councillor J. C. Pearce, J.P.
Vice-Chairman	-	-	Councillor H. B. Connolly.
Councillor H. J. Reed.			Councillor F. Edwards, B.E.M., J.P.
"	B. Edwards.	"	A. Barton.
"	O. Thorne.	"	J. Strange.
"	P. J. James.	"	F. Knight.
"	W. H. Davies.	"	W. C. H. Ford.
"	F. Matthews.	"	A. P. Griffiths.
"	R. J. Robson.	"	Ellis H. Williams.
"	F. G. Perkins.	"	J.P. L. S. Gulliford.

Officers:

Clerk & Solicitor	-	-	-	-	F. M. Davies.
Treasurer & Chief Financial Officer	-	-	-	-	T. H. Dixon.
Medical Officer of Health	-	-	-	-	Dr. K. E. Howells.
Engineer & Surveyor	-	-	-	-	C. C. Hardwick.
Public Health Inspector	-	-	-	-	Lloyd G. Hale.
Housing Engineer	-	-	-	-	D. F. Davies.

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND GENTLEMEN,

Once again it affords me the greatest pleasure to submit my Annual Report.

I have tried to make the report as interesting as possible, commenting where practicable on all aspects of the varied work undertaken by my department.

Birth Rate.

The birth rate has again fallen, and certainly there has been a dramatic decline since the figures of say a generation ago. The fall, as you will all be aware, is not only local, but a decline in the figures for the county, and the nation as a whole. However, to counteract these declining birth rate figures, we also have a drop in the death returns and death rate.

People generally are living longer, in much better health than ever before, giving at least some joy to the pessimists who say, "Ah, but what about the cost, we can't afford it".

The reply is simple, we cannot afford not to afford to have a healthy nation.

The children's diseases of former years are almost eliminated, and with the field trials of the measles vaccine proving so successful, this too, like scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis will no longer trouble us as in former years.

Costs.

All this, as it is to be appreciated, costs money, mountains of it, over one thousand, two hundred million pounds of it. Almost six times as much as was envisaged by the Beveridge Report of the early 1940's.

It will be noted, much to the surprise of the department, that the population figures dropped during the year under review, irrespective of the fact that the birth figures exceeded the deaths by some eighty-five. Further, I am reliably informed

that a large number of non-residents came into the area during the year, becoming residents on the Croespenmaen Estate, and to a lesser extent the Homeleigh Private Housing Estate.

It well may be that with the construction of factories within the Urban Area, this steady drift away of the population will be arrested, and possibly reversed over the next five to ten years.

Area of Abercarn Urban District Council				9,543
Population	...	...	...	19,070
Inhabited houses	...	...	...	6,002
Number of houses owned by the Council				1,758
Rateable value	...	...	1st April, 1966	£365,597
			1st April, 1967	£363,771
			1st April, 1968	£364,336
Product of Penny Rate	...	...	1965/66	£1,405/0/0
			1966/67	£1,430/0/0
			1967/68	£1,445/0/0
				(Est.)

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.

		1965	1966	1967
Males	...	153	153	156
Females	...	150	144	127
		—	—	—
		303	297	283
		—	—	—

Birth Rate of 1,000 of the Population ... 14.84

Stillbirths.

		1965	1966	1967
Stillbirth rate of 1,000 of				
the Population	...	16.1	23.9	21.2

Deaths.

		1965	1966	1967
Males	...	104	122	122
Females	...	100	97	76
		—	—	—
		204	219	198
		—	—	—

*O death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?*

1 Cor., XIV, 40.

Heart Diseases.

Is it not rather ironic, when the world and the mind boggles at the rapidity with which heart transplants take place today, to note that sixty-eight persons died of some form of heart disease, in the Urban Area during the year under review. Ironic, because it is here above all, in this highly specialised field of surgery, that perhaps the greatest progress has been made since the ending of the war.

These deaths, together with deaths caused by Bronchitis (twenty) and Cancer (thirty-eight), total one hundred and twenty-six deaths out of a total of one hundred and ninety-eight.

Surely the main purposes of medicine are:

1. to save life if possible;
2. to cure, if cure can be effected;
3. at all times to comfort the sick.

Do the transplants now taking place not exceed—step outside—the above functions, especially since Dr. Barnard's first heart transplant operation.

It is said that doctors have the power over life and death; is it really necessary for the Barnards, the Rosses and the Longmores of the world, to be made gods through their medical skill.

These men, aided by other equally brilliant specialists in their own field, can through their skill, laugh at death and literally say:

“O death, where is thy sting”?

Will the Hippocratic Oath be amended because of the legal, religious, financial and political problems that must be solved, before medical gods make supermen of mere mortals, make man immortal.

*"This is no flattery; these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am".
Shakespeare.*

Again an answer must be forthcoming as to who is to be chosen. What criteria will be used in choosing a patient; his or her social position? A rich person? Their potential worth to the country?

Will the adage:

"No one is indispensable",
be changed as the result of heart transplants. Will we live to see a black market in the cost of new hearts.

Examine further some different implications.

Financial Implications.

In the year 1966/67, the cost of the National Health Service was some £1½ million, on increase of some £140 million over the year 1965/66.

Consider then for the moment, the cost of the first heart transplant in this country. The setting up of a complete special care unit for just one person. What cost can be assessed to such an operation? £10,000 per person? Certainly not less.

Is not this type of operation going outside the bounds of the Beveridge Plan, whereby a flat rate contribution led to universal benefits at the same level to all.

"And death shall have no dominion".

D. Thomas.

Naturally ever increasing costs, the astronomical costs of these very special operations must bring into being selectivity. Who shall be selected, when, and why?

"Dead men naked they shall be one".

Spare part man.

For many years, we have grown accustomed to seeing man use artificial legs, hands, eyes and teeth.

"My days are in the yellow leaf".

. Short of human spare parts, can we permit, indeed, can we overcome the ethical problems involved in transplanting animal spare parts into the human frame.

*"My flowers and fruits of love,
The worm are gone".*

Who would want the heart of a sheep or pig, a plastic trachea, transplanted kidneys, oh no:

*"The canker and the grief
Are mine alone".* *Byron.*

Definition.

Doctors and lawyers are searching for a new definition to death. What will happen to the so called soul at death, does this re-enter the revivified body, or depart never to return, or is this another piece of bunkum, that has no meaning.

It well may be gentlemen, that the frightening spectre of a dehumanising market in human parts may be set up, where the rich gain and grow, treated by drugs to stave off natural degeneration, defying nature and staying alive for one hundred and fifty to two hundred years.

While the poor, the social outcasts, the misfits, the malformed, may seek temporary richness by waiting in the queue outside the spare parts banks.

To conclude, would it not be far better to intensify the research into the cause of the common cold. To produce a cocktail vaccine to completely prevent the nation as a whole catching cold or colds.

Think for a moment of the cost to the nation annually in terms of sickness benefits, the millions of man hours of production lost. There is no service, only to a few through heart transplants. Certainly there is nothing national about this part of the Health Service. Let us then stop it, before it gets out of control and leave:

*"Wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night".*

Dylan Thomas.

*"Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune
He had not the method of making a fortune".
Gray.*

VITAL STATISTICS—1967.

	Abercarn.	Mon. County Council.	England and Wales.
Live births	283	5,912	832,000
Live birth rate per 1,000 of population ...	14.84	17.13	17.2
Stillbirths	6	102	12,500
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 live and still births ...	20.7	16.99	14.8
Infant deaths ...	7	129	15,267
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births—total	24.7	21.82	Not Available
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births— legitimate	25.7	21.57	18.3
Neo Natal (first four weeks)	17.7	14.88	12.5
Death rate per 1,000 of population	10.0	12.87	11.2
Number of deaths ...	198	3,972	542,519
Mid year population (estimated) ...	19,070	351,740	48,390,800

Your Medical Officer is of the opinion that perhaps the Members of the Council would be interested in the setting out of the Vital Statistics for 1967, as in the aforementioned table.

"Oh my offence is rank, it smells to high heaven".

Hamlet.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Number of Deaths under One Year:

		1965	1966	1967
Boys	...	6	6	5
Girls	...	4	4	2
		—	—	—
		10	10	7
		—	—	—

Infantile Mortality Rate: 24.7

CAUSES OF INFANT DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES.

		0 to 1 week.	1 to 4 weeks.	4 weeks to one year
ALL CAUSES	...	...	—	—
Measles	...	...	—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	—	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	—	—
Influenza	...	...	—	—
Cerebral Spinal Fever	...	...	—	—
Cancer (Malignant Disease)	...	—	—	—
Syphilis	...	...	—	—
Tuberculosis	...	...	—	—
Bronchitis	...	...	—	—
Pneumonia (All Forms)	...	—	—	2
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	—	—	1
Diarrhoea	...	...	—	—
Congenital Debility	...	...	1	—
Premature Births	...	...	2	—
Digestive Diseases	...	—	—	—
Violence	...	—	—	—
Other Causes	...	—	—	—
		—	—	—
		3	1	3
		—	—	—

*"A little learning is a dangerous thing :
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring :
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain
And drinking largely sobers us again".*

Pope.

ACUTE RESPIRATORY DISEASES—DEATHS.

			1965	1966	1967
Bronchitis	...	...	16	16	20
Pneumonia	...	...	7	3	5
Other Forms	...	...	3	4	1
			—	—	—
			26	23	26
			—	—	—

CANCER DEATHS.

			1965	1966	1967
Males	...	...	19	24	24
Females	...	...	19	11	14
			—	—	—
			38	35	38
			—	—	—

Infectious Diseases.

The principal Notifiable Diseases are Smallpox, Typhoid, Typhus, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Puerperal Fever, Ophthalmia Neonatorum and Continued Fever.

There were no deaths from the Principal Notifiable Diseases during 1967.

"When bad men combine, the good must associate: else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice, in a contemptible struggle".

Burke.

CAUSES OF DEATH, 1967.

1966			1967		
M.	F.		M.	F.	
122	97	ALL CAUSES	...	...	...
		Tuberculosis—Respiratory System	...	—	—
		Tuberculosis Other	...	...	—
		Syphilitic	...	...	—
		Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	8	1
		Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	...	8	1
		Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	...	—	3
		Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	...	—	1
		Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	8	8
		Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	...	—	—
		Diabetes	...	...	1
		Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	...	11	24
		Coronary Disease, Angina	...	32	13
		Hypertension with Heart Disease	...	2	3
		Other Heart Disease	...	11	7
		Other Circulatory Disease	...	2	3
		Influenza	...	—	—
		Pneumonia	...	4	1
		Bronchitis	...	19	1
		Other Disease of Respiratory System	...	1	—
		Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	...	—	—
		Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	...	1	—
		Nephritis and Nephrosis	...	1	—
		Hyperplasia of Prostrate	...	—	—
		Congenital Malformations	...	1	3
		Other Defined and Ill-Defined Disease	...	7	5
		Motor Vehicle Accidents	...	3	—
		All Other Accidents	...	1	1
		Suicide	...	—	—
		Homicide and Operations of War	...	—	—

“When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
 I all alone beweep my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate”.

Shakespeare.

ANALYSIS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN AGE GROUPS.

Diseases.	Under 1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65	65 plus	Age Unknown	Total
Scarlet Fever...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles ...	5	9	11	16	9	40	5	—	—	—	—	3	98	—
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	2	1	—	—	2	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total ...	7	10	11	16	11	45	5	—	—	—	—	3	108	—

Total number of infectious diseases in age groups: 108.

NUMBER OF CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

		1964	1965	1966	1967
Scarlet Fever ...	...	1	7	1	1
Dysentery ...	...	—	17	2	—
Diphtheria ...	...	—	—	—	—
Cerebral Spinal Fever ...	...	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia ...	...	6	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis ...	...	—	—	—	—
Meningitis ...	...	1	—	—	—
Tuberculosis ...	...	7	10	10	2
Whooping Cough ...	...	13	—	5	9
Erysipelas ...	...	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum...	...	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	...	—	—	—	—
Food Poisoning ...	...	1	30	—	—
Paratyphoid Fever ...	...	—	—	—	—
Measles ...	...	444	—	286	98
		473	64	306	110

VACCINATION—SMALLPOX.

Vaccination for the year totalled: 118

(1) Number of Persons Vaccinated (or re-vaccinated) during the period.

Age at date of vaccination	Under 1	2—4	4—15	15 or over	Total
Number vaccinated	30	43	12	—	85
Number re-vaccinated	—	3	30	—	33

(2) Number of Cases Specially Reported during Period (Age Groups as above).

(a) Generalised Vaccinia	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Post-vaccinal Encephalo- myelitis	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Death from complications of vaccination other than (a) or (b)	—	—	—	—	—

TRIPLE IMMUNISATION—WHOOPING COUGH TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA.

The following table is submitted for your information:

Age at date of Immunisation	Under 1	1-2	2-4	4-8	Under 16	Total
Number Immunised	69	137	16	7	3	232
Number Re-immunised	—	57	179	51	3	290

Immunisation for the year totalled: 522.

INFANT WELFARE CENTRES ATTENDANCES.

Attendances at the Infant Welfare Centre for the year 1967 are set out in the following table for your information:

Centre	Under 1	1966	1961-65		
Cwmcarn	...	54	70	205	
Abercarn	...	36	39	127	
Newbridge	...	97	107	215	
Pantside	...	13	16	61	
Trinant	...	63	45	103	
Centre	Under 1	Under 2	Under 5	Over 1	Over 2
Cwmcarn	557	876	892	2,225	
Abercarn	330	398	449	1,177	
Newbridge	1,020	1,131	1,028	3,031	
Pantside	92	86	182	508	
Trinant	1,010	776	629	2,415	
Attendances at the Cwmcarn Centre			...	2,225	
Attendances at the Abercarn Centre			...	1,177	
Attendances at the Newbridge Centre			...	3,031	
Attendances at the Pantside Centre			...	508	
Attendances at the Trinant Centre			...	2,415	
Total attendances for the year 1967	...		9,356		

Once again the attendances at the various Infant Welfare Centres showed how popular these Centres have become, with the passing of the years. It is at these Centres that apart from advice to nursing and expectant mothers, guidance and care is given.

It is in such establishments that real preventative medicine is carried out. The results can be seen in the low annual figures of children's diseases notifications, which apart from the ninety-eight cases of measles reported is almost negligible.

SUMMARY OF TUBERCULOSIS CASES.

		Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non- Total
		M.	F.	M.	F.	
Total Cases on Register						
31-12-66	...	55	63	4	6	128
New Cases, 1966	...	2	—	—	—	2
Deaths	...	—	—	—	—	—
Recovered	...	3	2	—	—	5
Removed for other Reasons	...	—	—	—	—	—
Removed from District	...	—	—	—	—	—
Total Cases on Register						
31-12-67	...	54	61	4	6	125

Annual Return of Food Poisoning Out-Breaks in the Area of the Abercarn Urban District Council for the year 1st January, to 31st December, 1967.

In accordance with the Circular 46/49 (Wales) dated 24th May, 1949, Returns as per Memo. 188/MED. (Appendix I) are submitted herewith.

Annual Return of Food Poisoning Notifications (corrected).

Local Authority Abercarn Urban District Council, year
1st January, 1967, to 31st December, 1967.

(2nd) Food Poisoning Notification Corrected Return to R.G.

1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.	Total
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

(3rd) Outbreaks due to identified Agents.

Total Outbreaks ... Nil Total Cases ... Nil

(3rd A) Outbreaks due to Salmonella Organisms ... Nil

(4th) Outbreaks of Undiscovered Cause.

Total Outbreaks ... Nil Total Cases ... Nil

(5th) Outbreaks.

Single Cases Nil

Agent Identified Nil

Unknown Cases Nil

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE HEALTH SERVICE.

Medical Officer of Health :

Dr. K. E. Howells, D.P.H. (London).

Public Health Inspector :

Lloyd G. Hale, F.R.S.H.

Maternity and Child Welfare Services.

These services are maintained by the County Council at Cwmcarn, Abercarn, Newbridge, Pantside and Trinant.

Isolation Hospitals.

There are no Isolation Hospitals in the Council's Area, but arrangements have been made for Infectious Diseases cases to be admitted to the Bedwellty Isolation Hospital, Aberbargoed, and Allt-yr-yn Hospital, Newport.

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

It is now the duty of the County Council to administer this service. This duty is performed by their Area Medical Officers.

Ambulance Service.

Under the provision of the National Health Service Act, 1946, the County Council now administer the Ambulance Service.

Bacteriological Examination of Pathological Specimens.

Samples of Milk, Ice-Cream, Water and samples from the Council's Swimming Baths were submitted to the Laboratory at the County Hall for examination during the year.

Water Supplies.

The Council is a constituent Authority of the Abertillery and District Water Board. The chief supply is obtained from Grwyne-Fawr Reservoir situated in the Black Mountains, Breconshire, subsidiary supplies are obtained from local sources. The water is of good quality and large supplementary quantities were obtained from Llanover Scheme. The water is sampled by the Board and from time to time by the Local Authority (who submitted samples for bacteriological examination). Where necessary the supplies were chlorinated by the Board's Officials.

"Small service is true service while it lasts".

Number of houses with piped supply	...	5,991
Number of houses supplied from wells and springs (estimated)	...	...
Approximate population supplied from Public Water Mains, direct to Houses...	19,037	11

During the year inspections were made of water supplies and systems generally, where the pressure was reported to be low. Upon inspection it was found that in almost all cases the corrosion of pipes was responsible for inadequate supplies for all domestic purposes. In such cases, Informal Notices and where necessary Statutory Notices under Section 138 of the Public Health Act, 1936, as amended by Section 30 of the Water Act, 1945, were served with complete success.

Sewers and Drains.

The Council is a constituent Member of the Western Valley Sewerage Board. The Council's subsidiary sewers are connected to the Main Trunk Sewer.

Scavenging.

Scavenging is carried out by direct labour with a twice weekly collection.

The tipping of refuse at Fields Park, Newbridge has now been completed, and the tip levelled and substantially covered with top soil.

A new tip has been started at Trinant. Naturally longer hauls, and increased costs are involved, through the siting of the tip at the end of an elongated district.

A special machine has been purchased with a view to keeping a greater degree of control over the refuse, and minimising the various nuisances that arise.

When this tip is completed, a useful parcel of ground will be reclaimed, and made into a playing field for the nearby Infants' School at Trinant.

Refuse Disposal.

Regular inspections in connection with Rodent Control and Fly Breeding have been carried out, and extensive treatments for the elimination of rodents and flies are continually being undertaken.

Bacteriological Examination of Water Supplies, Milk and Ice-Cream.

A total of seventy-five samples were submitted for bacteriological examinations during the year.

Fifty-seven milk, seven water and eleven ice-cream. The milk samples were purchased off vendors in the course of delivery to the consumers, at School canteens and Factory canteens.

The water samples were taken from land springs, such as are at the Colliery Road, Cwmcarn, and near Pennar Villa, New Bethel, the Council's swimming baths and certain water supply taps in factories and schools in the area. All samples submitted proved to be satisfactory.

Ten milk samples failed during the year, of the total taken. That is to say, the samples failed to pass the Methylene Blue reduction test, meaning that the keeping quality of the milk was impaired.

At the time these samples were taken, the air temperature was around seventy degrees fahrenheit. If the bottles were exposed for any length of time, the temperature of the milk would soon have raised itself above the permitted level of fifty-five degrees fahrenheit, which in turn would impair the keeping quality of the milk.

The Bacteriologists advice was to retake the samples. This was done from exactly the same vendors, and the samples submitted for examination passed the tests set down.

*“Full many a glorious morning have I seen,
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye.
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy”.*

Rainfall.

The table shows the monthly rainfall, also the day of the month when the greatest fall occurred.

Month	Total Inches of Rainfall	Greatest fall in 24 Hrs.		No. of days of Recorded Rainfall
		Day	Inches	
January	... 3.15	22	0.74	8
February	... 8.26	28	2.60	14
March	... 2.58	3	0.70	9
April	... 1.55	12	0.75	5
May	... 8.31	22	1.57	11
June	... 1.92	24	1.25	4
July	... 2.13	28	0.75	6
August	... 2.16	13	0.45	7
September	... 7.03	13	1.02	12
October	... 10.49	16	2.56	14
November	... 2.35	1	1.20	5
December	... 6.95	22	1.65	10
Total	... 56.88	—	—	105

Rainfall is recorded at Abercarn Cemetery.

Height above Sea Level: 539.9 feet.

Housing.

During the year six houses were completed, and handed over for letting. By comparison, eighty-six houses and bungalows were built by private enterprise in 1967. However odious comparisons can be, the Council will undoubtedly reap the benefit in embarking upon a most ambitious housing scheme at Pantside.

Progress at year-end was so marked, in all the various building phases that the Council can look forward to the completion of the site at the year-end of 1968.

*Breathes there man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land".*

Scott.

One could say so much in regard to this phase of housing that is pleasing: so well planned; designed to Parker Morris standard; all the houses having central heating throughout; and almost all having a garage in close proximity to the house.

To me, here is the realisation of the dream,
"I dreamt I lived in marbled halls".

Why not, Mr. Chairman, build some more! Why not!

Replacement.

With the immediate contemplative replacement of the fifty Arcons at Pentwynmawr, and the replacement of the one hundred bungalows at Croespenmaen and Trinant, the Council will have gone a long way towards solving the housing needs of the Urban Area for years to come.

Last year, I spent some time at Beulah (West Wales), yes, actually staying at a mansion, revivifying frayed nerves at Cenarth and Mwnt Bays, Cardigan. My reverie in tranquility was disturbed by receiving a postcard:

"Come back at once, Ranks sold".

Upon return, I was informed that the Yanks were interested in buying, shipping the lot over to America and rebuilding them there, describing them as Ancient Briton abodes. While agreeing these houses are almost old enough to have been occupied by the Silures, I quickly realised that there was no truth in this rumour, that this story was completely unfounded, that an Abercarn Eynon Evans was at work, that however much the West End, Dylan Thomases

"May rage against the dying of the light",
it will be the Council, who will soon demolish the Ranks, putting to flight the sardonic humour of the Evanses and Thomases who live in Abercarn.

The Council may yet take a leaf out of their books, and re-echo the cry of perhaps its greatest son:

"I will make it a land fit for heroes to live in".

*“Of humblest friends, bright creature, scorn not one:
The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering, dew-drop from the sun”.*

Wordsworth.

On a more serious note, we require a replacement figure of some two hundred housing units, plus say a further fifty to replace Celynen Terrace and Commercial Road, commonly known as "Shop Row".

The Council may well feel that applicants remaining on the Council's housing lists can be accommodated by way of vacancies occurring in Council housing estates during the years to come, especially when one bears in mind that the vacancy rate over the last three or four years has run at about seven to eight per cent. of the total.

Improvement Grants.

During the year the Council received the largest number of applications for Improvement Grants since powers were given to Local Authorities, under the Housing Act, 1949.

These totalled 118: Discretionary Grants 106; and Standard Grants 12.

Of the total of discretionary applications, seventy were in two separate Improvement Areas. The larger of the Improvement Areas involved some fifty-six National Coal Board houses, costing a total of approximately £70,000, a break down of the cost show, that some £10,000 to £12,000 will be expended on miscellaneous items of disrepair, listed by the Department. Notices under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1957, were served upon the National Coal Board, in respect of each property.

The improvements have been estimated at between £56,000 and £58,000 at that time. The Council contribution being shown as some £26,000 or so.

Encouraging as this may seem, it is somewhat disappointing to learn that through a cut back in capital expenditure, delay is being experienced in starting this ambitious scheme until the year 1969. Irrespective of this, the department feels that

the scheme could easily be started, if only attention were given to remedying the defects found at the time of inspection, before the Area was declared an Improvement Area.

Conversely, a start could well be made on a section of the Area by way of the erection of the buildings to house the modern amenities. The cry of a Local Government minor (pun).

Another board is also using the present economical difficulties

“to hide its light under a bushel”, as it were. The Electricity Board should sally forth, no-one can blow out their light.

Why not light the four farms at the top of the Pant? The applicants are prepared to pay at least £300 each for the privilege of having a supply brought to their door. To wire the various rooms is an extra cost, this together with modernisation schemes would be paid in part by the Council under the Housing Act, 1964.

The farmers would have the luxury of being able to have a hot bath, power points to heat the bedrooms, and the farm itself lit up like a battleship at night.

The cow sheds would also be lit, milking machines could be used for the first time at these farms.

The farmer's wife would be in her seventh heaven with a vacuum cleaner, a television set, a small electric motor to pump the water up out of the well.

The possibilities are endless. It is particularly frustrating when all these farms are adjacent to the Pant Estate Phase III, Electricity within a stone's throw of all four farms. Yet the Board after twenty years of waiting say no, economically it is not possible.

One of the most famous of all the sons of Gwent once said:

“It will take a genius of disorganisation
to create a power shortage”.

Gentlemen! I know four farmers all with £300 each to spend on light, won't some one show them the way.

Improvements down through the ages.

There is a song, which opens with the words:

"It's a long, long time
From May to September".

I would like to extend that theme from 1949 to 1968, and respectfully submit that when the Housing Act, 1949, gave Local Authorities power to give discretionary grants to applicants, initially we treated the early application with nervousness through lack of experience, gaining momentum with experience.

Some Local Authorities never bothered to implement the Improvements sections of the Housing Act, 1949. Abercarn Council were certainly the first Council in Monmouthshire to successfully apply these important provisions.

Even now, in 1967, three years after giving Local Authorities powers to declare Improvement Areas, incidentally we have declared two Improvement Areas, very many Local Authorities still have to use these powers. The total of authorities that have used the powers contained in the Housing Act, 1964, do not number more than one hundred and twenty up to the time these observations were made.

The procedure for making or declaring Improvement Areas is a little tortuous. However with legal pruning, in my opinion it could be made into a useful piece of legislation.

It is also rather pleasing to be able to report, that the Council are using their powers under Section 19 of the Housing Act, 1964, in short, compelling the owner to improve a tenanted house. After all, what good is legislation if it is not used.

To conclude, one thing is sure, many of the proposals contained in the White Paper "Old Houses into New Homes" will fail. Everyone must accept that since 1949 discretionary grant maximums of £400, rightly should be increased, if only to off-set the large increased costs of labour, to say nothing of materials since that time.

A similar situation has arisen with Standard Grants since 1959, but to increase the figure to £1,000 is a little too ambitious. The effect will obviously be to slow down the rate of improvements, not accelerate it, which I am sure is the intention of the White Paper.

“Like us the waves towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end
Each changing place with that which goes before”.

Further, it is difficult to see how public funds can honestly be spent on the installation of Standard amenities, where the property has a life of less than fifteen years. If a time limit is imposed make it a generous one. Remembering that already the Local Authorities have power to declare an application null and void after three years, under the Building Regulations. Why change the existing three year period?

The following complaints were received during the year and remedied, these are set out for your information.

Exterior.		1967
Chimney stacks rebuilt or repaired	...	74
Chimney stacks sealed off	...	48
Roofs repaired or renewed	...	93
Rainwater pipes and eaves gutters renewed or repaired	...	64
Walls—rebuilt or repaired	...	7
rendered for the prevention of dampness	...	7
external plastering repaired	...	3
damp proof courses inserted	...	1
Outbuildings repaired	...	1
Obstructive outbuildings demolished	...	2
Yards, passages, etc., paved or repaired	...	7

Interior

Doors and frames renewed or repaired	...	...	113
Floors renewed or repaired	...	...	56
Floors ventilated	...	...	Nil
Grates or ovens renewed or repaired	...	...	4
Grates or ovens sealed off	...	...	61
Internal plastering (walls) repaired or replastered	...	...	213
Internal plastering (ceilings) repaired or replastered	...	...	128
Larders provided	...	...	1
Larders improved or repaired	...	...	Nil
Staircases repaired	...	...	12
Windows and frames renewed or repaired	...	...	305
Window cords renewed	...	...	10

*"Diffused knowledge
immortalizes itself".*

Drainage.

New drains constructed	...	...	...	...	1
Drains cleansed	...	...	...	...	Nil
Drains reconstructed	...	...	...	...	2
Drains repaired	...	...	...	...	2
Gullies fixed	...	...	...	...	1
Inspection chambers provided or repaired	...	...	...	...	Nil
Lavatory basins or baths waste pipes trapped or repaired	...	...	...	...	Nil
Soil pipes or ventilating shafts fixed or repaired	...	...	...	...	1
Waste water sinks trapped or waste pipes repaired	...	...	...	...	5

Water Closets.

Water closet buildings repaired	...	...	...	...	3
Seats, doors renewed or repaired	.....	...	...	...	2
Water closets reconstructed	...	...	...	...	Nil
New W.C. pans and traps fixed	...	...	...	...	4
Flushing apparatus provided	...	...	...	...	Nil
Flushing apparatus repaired	...	...	...	...	1

Miscellaneous Repairs and Nuisances Abated.

Storage accommodation provided or improved	..	...	...	...	Nil
Water supply provided	...	...	...	...	1
Water taps or pipes repaired	...	...	...	...	3
Fascia boards renewed or repaired	...	...	...	...	3
Skirting boards renewed or repaired	...	...	...	...	14
Waste water sinks provided	...	...	...	...	6
Joints raked out and repointed	...	...	...	...	4
Other repairs and nuisances abated	...	...	...	...	4
Total	...	...	...	...	1,267

During the year under review the department inspected 167 Council Housing Units, making 204 visits for this purpose, when the properties were vacated.

Undoubtedly these inspections for general tidiness and overall decorative inspection, brings an awareness to the occupiers, as to their responsibilities in leaving the Council property in a fit and clean (decorative wise) condition.

"Disciplined inaction".

Housing.

Number of dwelling houses inspected	...	...	814
Re-inspected	...	...	528
Number of premises at which repairs and improvements have been carried out	...	...	844
Warning Notices	...	...	179
Remedied without Notice	...	...	154
Statutory Notices served	...	...	163
Statutory Notices complied with	...	...	163
Statutory Notices not complied with	...	...	Nil
Number of houses in the area	...	...	6,002
Number of dwelling houses erected during the year by the Council	...	...	6
Number of new houses erected privately in the year 1966	...	...	86

Drainage.

Drainage stoppages dealt with, new drainage connections, improvements and repairs	...	260
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The following statement is in the form prescribed by the Ministry:—

1. Inspection of dwelling houses during the year:—				
(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected during the year for housing defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts)	...	814		
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	1,003		
(2) (a) Demolition Orders made	...	4		
(b) Closing Orders made	...	5		
(3) Undertakings accepted not to re-let for human habitation	...	...	Nil	
(4) Closing Orders revoked after premises have been made fit	...	...	3	
2. Remedyng of Defects during the year without Service of Formal Notices	...	285		
Number of dwelling houses rendered fit for occupation in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	...	285		

3.	Action under Statutory Powers during the year:—	
	(a) Proceedings under Section 9 and 10 of the Housing Act, 1957	123
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repair	286
	(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of Formal Notice:	
	(a) By Owners	286
	(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners	Nil
	Number of houses under Circular 2845...	Nil
	(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:—	
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Notices were served requiring repair	68
	(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit	68
	(a) By Owners	68
	(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners	Nil
	(c) Proceedings under Sections 16 and 17 of the Housing Act, 1957:—	
	(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	2
	(2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	2
	(d) Proceedings under Section 18 of the Act, 1957:—	
	(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenements or rooms having been rendered fit	Nil
4.	Housing Act, 1957—Part IV. Overcrowding.	
	(a) (1) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	30

"Tea is water bewitched".

Dean Swift.

"Whiskey is water be-devilled".

D. T. Hale.

(2) Number of families dwelling therein	39
(3) Number of persons dwelling therein	117
(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	... ... 1

Tea will not be discussed here, but rather the concern that must be felt for the continuing scientific adulteration of our foodstuffs.

Over the last twenty years, all interested persons have watched the improvements in food processing, packaging, improved methods of storage and the ever increasing subtle ways of sales promotion.

Yet little public concern is expressed at the ever increasing number of almost three hundred different chemicals, antibiotics and drugs now used in animal foodstuffs or drink.

Over twelve hundred different chemicals are added to food, whilst meat can be, and often is treated with over one hundred and twenty-five antioxidants, emulsifiers, stabilizers, extenders and the latest, animals are now injected before death supervenes, in order to make the meat more tender.

Colouring dyes are the order of the day, masking the loss of colour, making the food good to look at, almost aseptic bacteriologically, sterile and tasteless.

Almost everyone, certainly all those such as Medical Officers of Health, Veterinary Officers, Public Health Officers are deeply concerned at the ever expanding practice of the use of drugs, chemicals, and colouring dyes used in foodstuffs today.

Perhaps commercially a case could be made out for the introduction of antibiotics into the animal body to increase growth. This in turn leads to the almost aseptic, bacteriologically sterile conditions, in the animal body, anaerobic and aerobic organisms, together with the *proteus vulgaris* having all been killed off, leaving in its wake a sterile anaemic, papier mache like substance, called food.

To POWER INC.

*"Ill fares the land, to hastening ill a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath has made,
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied".*

Goldsmith.

For years it is well known that farmers, doctor their ailing bovines with penicillin without supervision. Babies could be affected, especially if they prove to be allergic to penicillin. While adults may be more prone, particularly if they drank raw T.T. milk heavily tainted with penicillin, especially if they have received large doses of penicillin given medically under supervision by their family doctors.

It is to be hoped that the Medical Research Council, together with other responsible Committees, that are carrying out continual research, before the final approval is given for the use of drugs, chemicals and dyes into foodstuffs, will ensure that no harmful effects be experienced by the consumer.

Meat and Other Foods.

A large quantity of tinned and other foods were inspected during the year. The following articles were condemned as being unfit for human consumption:—

40 lb. apples.	15 tins minced steak
4 lb. bacon.	65 tins milk.
111 tins beans.	2 tins ox tongue.
40 lb. beef (decomposed).	63 tins peaches.
10 tins braised steak.	24 tins pears.
3 tins casserole steak	102 tins peas.
9½ lb. cheese.	2 tins pilchards.
82 tins corned beef.	3 tins rice.
331½ lb. cooked ham.	4 lb. sausage.
44 tins chopped ham.	4 tins soup.
16 tins chopped pork.	7 sponges.
5 tins cream.	4 tins steak.
36 tins fruit cocktail.	7 tins stewed steak.
7 tins fruit salad.	2 steak and kidney pies.
14 tins grapefruit.	5 tins strawberries.
18 lb. jellied veal.	2 tins tongue.
126 tins luncheon meat.	107 tins tomatoes.

TABLE A. REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS.

Class of Premises.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		Number of premises registered during the year.	Total number of registered premises at end of year.	Number of registered premises receiving a general inspection during the year
Offices	41	36
Retail Shops	96	79
Wholesale shops, warehouses	...	—	24	18
Catering establishments open to the public, canteens	—	—
Fuel Storage depots	—	—

TABLE B. NUMBER OF VISITS OF ALL KINDS BY INSPECTOR TO REGISTERED PREMISES.

TABLE C. ANALYSIS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN REGISTERED PREMISES BY WORKPLACE.

Class of Workplace.	Number of persons employed.
(1)	(2)
Offices	330
Retail Shops	317
Wholesale departments, warehouses ...	57
Catering establishments open to the public	65
Canteens	—
Fuel Storage depots	—
 Total	769
 Total Males	375
 Total Females ...	394

TABLE D. EXEMPTIONS.

M/c Line No.	Class of Workplace	No. of exemptions current at 31st Dec.	No. of exemptions granted or extended during year	No. of applications refused or exemptions withdrawn during year	No. of cases in Cols. 3 and 4 where employees opposed application	Appeals to Court against refusal to grant or extend an exemption or against the withdrawal of an exemption.	
						No. made (6)	No. allowed (7)
PART I. Space (Sec. 5 (2)).							
1 Offices	—	—	—	—
2 Retail shops	—	—	—	—
3 Wholesale shops, warehouses	—	—	—	—	—
4 Catering establishments open to public, canteens	—	—	—	—	—
5 Fuel storage depots	—	—	—	—	—
PART II. Temperature (Sec. 6).							
11 Offices	—	—	—	—
12 Retail shops	—	—	—	—
13 Wholesale shops, warehouses	—	—	—	—	—
14 Catering establishments open to public, canteens...	—	—	—	—	—
15 Fuel storage depots	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE D. EXEMPTIONS (continued).
PART III. Sanitary Conveniences (Sec. 9).

M/c Line No.	Class of Workplace	No. of exemptions current at 31st Dec. during year	No. of exemptions granted or extended during year	No. of applications refused or exemptions withdrawn during year	No. of Cases in Cols. 3 and 4 where employees opposed application	Appeals to Court against refusal to grant or extend an exemption or against the withdrawal of an exemption.	No. made	No. allowed
							(6)	(7)
21	Offices	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
22	Retail shops	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
23	Wholesale shops, warehouses	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
24	Catering establishments open to public, canteens	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	Fuel storage depots	...	—	—	—	—	—	—

PART IV. Washing Facilities (Sec. 10).

31	Offices	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
32	Retail shops	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
33	Wholesale shops, warehouses	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
34	Catering establishments open to public, canteens...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—
35	Fuel storage depots	...	...	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE E. PROSECUTIONS.

Prosecutions instituted of which the hearing was completed in the year.

Section of Act or title of Regulation or Order.	No. of persons or companies prosecuted	No. of informations laid	No. of informations leading to a conviction
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

No. of complaints (or summary applications) made under Section 22 Nil
 No. of interim orders granted Nil

“What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned?
What, are you answered yet?”

Aubrey Jones to you.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949.

Report for 12 months ended 31st December, 1967.

Sewers.

4. Number of sewers infested by rats during the year ... 1

Surface Properties and Sewers.

5. Any other points of interest? None, worthy of mention.

All individual complaints during the year were dealt with, which entailed several visits by the Rodent Operator to one single reported case.

*"The frivolous work of
polished idleness".*

Factories and Workshops.

Total number of factories in the area ...	8
Total number of workshops in the Area ...	22

The factories and workshops are periodically inspected in order that they comply with the Factories Act, 1937.

Particulars	Number of Defects			Referred No. of to H.M. Prose- cutions
	Found	Remedied	Inspector	
Want of Cleanliness	... 4	4	—	—
Want of Ventilation	... 1	1	—	—
Want of Drainage of floors	2	2	—	—
Sanitary Accommodation:				
Other Nuisances	... 2	2	—	—
Insufficient	... —	—	—	—
Unsuitable or Defective	... 5	5	—	—
Not separate for sexes	... —	—	—	—
	14	14	—	—

Dr. K. E. HOWELLS, D.P.H. (London),
Medical Officer of Health

LLOYD G. HALE, F.R.S.H., Public Health Inspector.

